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ABSTRACT

This paper is presented by the Educational Leadership Council of America, a group that shares a desire to promote personalized environments in which successful experiences are possible for all. In this publication, the authors present a review of the literature related to the effects of success upon personal development. The Council believes that supervisors, teachers, administrators, and others involved in educational leadership are better able to provide a climate for student success and self-worth when they themselves work well together and experience success. (Author)

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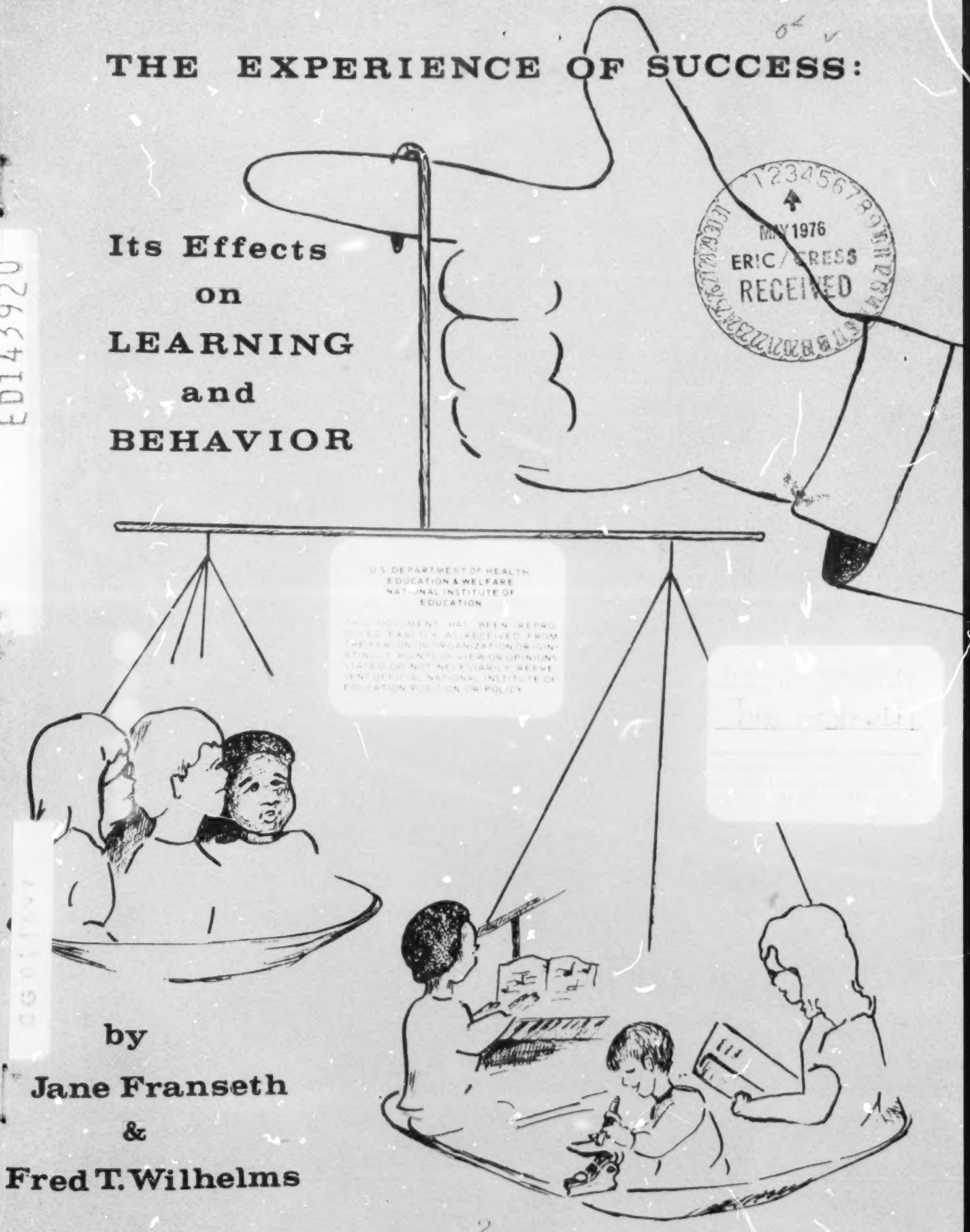
THE EXPERIENCE OF SUCCESS:

Its Effects on LEARNING and BEHAVIOR



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THE EXPERIENCE OF SUCCESS:

ITS EFFECTS ON LEARNING AND BEHAVIOR

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

By

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THE EXPERIENCE OF SUCCESS:

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INTRODUCTION

The Educational Leadership Council of America is an organization founded by a small group of people who share a desire to promote personalized environments in which success experiences are possible for all.

We make this effort because we believe that the experience of success is crucial and essential to the optimum development of any human. Furthermore we believe that, to have their full effect on a person, success experiences must be perceived as such by that person. For a boy or girl's inner knowledge of success is a cornerstone of a wholesome and positive self-concept. Each success experience enhances the opportunity for future success, and, over time, a sound personality is built upon an adequate sequence of such experiences.

We believe that supervisors, teachers, administrators, and others involved in educational leadership are better able to provide a climate for student success and self-worth when they themselves work well together and experience success. We believe that the experience of success will be evident in the learning and behavior of all the people involved. A well informed and capable citizenry is essential to the preservation of a free society. We believe that the provision of opportunities for all in accordance with their individual needs, abilities, and interests is the first step in the development of such a citizenry. This project is designed to foster progress toward such ends.

The Council is still relatively young, and, as yet, it commands no great resources. In this first preliminary paper we present a review of the related literature. We have chosen this starting point for two reasons:

1. to test our assumptions and ideas against whatever evidence there may be; and,

2. to enrich those ideas and assumptions and broaden our field of operation.

In choosing this line of action we have recognized from the start that we would probably find no great mass of hard data. Very little experimentation has focussed directly upon the question of the effect of success upon personal becoming. But, imbedded in a great deal of research and development as well as in educational theory and philosophy, there is a more-or-less explicit acceptance of success as one of the keys to a healthful formative environment. Therefore, in our search of the literature we have swung a fairly wide net.

The very fact that we have had to do so is powerful evidence of the need for this Council's focussed concern. The time is ripe for explicit study of the impact of the experience of success upon human development, along with study of the ways in which the possibility of success may be enhanced for all children and youth.

Jane Franseth
Chief Investigator

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

I. THE NATURE OF SUCCESS

Success is hard to define. It may be seen as a favorable termination of a venture; the attainment of wealth, favor, or eminence; self actualization; the achievement of a fully functioning personality or adequate self. Maybe the key statement is that success is feeling good about oneself; the good feeling that comes when one knows that he has really hit the ball.

For our educational purposes we are thinking not so much of the rare, sensational victory as of a long, continuing, additive experience of little victories. The first essential is that there be some challenge--large or small--which the learner can overcome only if he stretches himself to real effort, and that he does overcome it. The second essential is that the youngster knows his abilities have been tested, and that he has met the test. For each such little conquest builds confidence and releases energy for the next, greater challenge.

It follows that the calibration of challenge--the matching of hurdle with potential--is crucial. If, for a given learner, a hurdle is set too high, there is really no challenge at all, for the only possibility is failure; if it is set too low, there is really no challenge either, for the only possibility is the humdrum repetition of what has already been achieved. This "problem of the match" poses enormous difficulties for schools, simply because they deal with so many and such diverse learners. A common assignment can mean inevitable failure for some and meaningless "passing" for others--no real success in either case.

One point must be emphasized: We are not talking about a flat, easy educational pathway in which there are no incidental failures along the way. Learners whose self-belief has been bolstered by a warm, accepting climate and a long gradient of success will take risks; they will often tackle what they cannot immediately handle. Thus, in a sense, they will have far more "failures" than their less healthy schoolmates. But the very trying is a victory of a sort; taken in stride, the experience is a healthy part of growing; and this road leads to far greater ultimate success than the soft path clung to by the timid.

Experiments show that the feeling of success and failure does not depend on an absolute level of achievement. What for one person means success means failure for another person, and even for this same person the same achievement will lead sometimes to the feeling of failure and sometimes to the feeling of success.

What counts is the level of achievement of an individual relative to certain standards particular to his level of aspiration (goal line); if the achievement lies on or above the goal line, he will probably feel success, depending on the size of this difference and the way in which the achievement has been reached.

Hilgard (21, pp. 27, 60-80) says,

> Success has to be understood according to what the learner is trying to do and the relationship between success and his goal. Psychological analysis of success from the point of view of the learner shows at least the following possibilities: (1) To reach a goal constitutes success. . . It is obviously satisfying to try for something and to achieve it. (2) To get within the region of the goal may be a success experience--may be hoping for an "A" grade, for example, but might be satisfied with a "B" . . . (3) To make noticeable progress toward a goal may provide a success experience even though the goal may be remote. . . (4) To select a socially approved goal may in itself be a success experience.

Hilgard continues, "psychological success or failure depends on ego involvement in the task at hand."

William James (24) reports that the task must be real to the learner so that, if achieved, there is elation and a feeling of significant accomplishment; if the objective is not achieved, there is chagrin or humiliation and a feeling of defeat. Self esteem may be expressed as the ratio between our success and our pretension.

SUCCESS AND FAILURE

Throughout history there have been many attempts to improve learning and behavior by rewarding success and punishing failure. One way of gauging the impact of success is to study the subsequent behavior and attitudes of learners who have been given positive recognition or rewards as against those who have been designated as failing. Even though the school's marks do not change the child's actual success or failure in his work, he may well accept the teacher's estimate as so authoritative that he will respond as he would to actual success or failure.

In the school, success has been determined by ascertaining an average of a population and counting those as average or above (plus some who are somewhat below the average) as passable but those at the bottom as failures. Very often a pupil's work is appraised in terms of a single grade standard. The expectancy of some people is

that pupils receiving a low score will be challenged to do better. This is true for some pupils, but for those who score low repeatedly it is not likely to improve their learning and behavior. Studies that follow show that experiences of failure are not likely to improve what an individual does. On the other hand, success experiences foster progress. The effects of success and failure on pupil learning and behavior are indicated.

Promotion and Non-promotion

Much of what follows here is adapted from Pupil Failure and Non Promotion, a 1962 Research Memo of the NEA Research Division (40).

Otto and Melby (34) tested equated groups of pupils--192 in grade 2A and 160 in grade 3A, taught by 18 teachers in four school systems. Children in the experimental group, who were told that they would be promoted regardless of their efforts, made slightly more progress than those in the control group, who were told they would not be promoted if they did not work diligently.

The experimental groups in grade 2A, who were guaranteed promotion, gained 8.0 months in educational age, going from 99.0 to 107.0 months. The control groups in 2A, who were threatened with failure, gained 6.9 months, going from 100.3 months to 107.2 months. In grade 3A, the experimental group gained 6.2 months to 107.2 months, while the control group gained 5.5 months, going from 138.6 to 144.1 months.

Coffield and Blommere (3) examined the results of achievement tests in an effort to answer the question: Do children of low achievement make more progress if they are promoted in spite of low achievement? For 93 repeaters classmates who were promoted but who matched them initially in test scores were identified; for the remaining 57, a similar match was made in another school system. Results showed that promoted children, whose achievement before promotion was as low as that of the repeaters, made greater progress than did those who repeated a grade.

Sandin (43) compared the social and emotional adjustment of regularly promoted and non-promoted pupils. He found that failure is accompanied by social and emotional strains. Problems arising from difficulty with the work were almost secondary to difficulties in making friends and in teacher-pupil relationships. He found that 40 percent of those who had failed a grade wished to quit school; only 15 percent of the regularly promoted pupils did.

Educators have studied pupils of equal intelligence and achievement, some of whom were promoted and some failed. School officials in one study assembled the list of all the pupils who were to be retained in the first grade in a school system. Half of these pupils were promoted and the other half retained as teachers had recommended. The promoted pupils showed better adjustment.

Research has shown that holding children back to repeat a grade while their friends move ahead, says A. A. Sandin (43), has very unwholesome effects upon their behavior and adjustment. Non-promoted children exhibited more troublesome behavior, were more inattentive, less cooperative, more easily discouraged, and worried about their failure. Non-promotion gives a child a difficult adjustment problem and often leads to leaving school.

Daniel Prescott (38) reports that a child's concept of himself is altered by non-promotion in such a way that he tends to lose confidence in himself and has a much lower level of aspiration in relation both to his school work and to what he hopes to become. This means that non-promoted children are not stimulated to do better work, but actually are influenced to set lower goals for themselves and to try less hard. Relative to the findings of research, Prescott (38, p. 436) concludes:

> . . . traditional concepts of what the education process should be, run counter to what we know scientifically about how children develop and learn. Findings show that traditional procedures are not effective in practice and often are detrimental to a child's learning and adjustment.

W. S. Elsbree and J. H. McNally (13) have evaluated the research findings and have concluded that non-promotion does not maintain graded school standards, reduce variation within grades, provide good motivation, enable slow learners to catch up, or bring about better adjustment in pupils. In other words, as Prescott (38, p. 435) puts it, teachers' tasks are not simplified by the practice of "failing" children, but on the contrary may be made more difficult.

H. A. Caswell and A. W. Foshay (5) cite a number of research findings which show that "failing" children who are promoted actually show greater progress than similar pupils who are held back. Obviously the enforcement of grade-level standards defeats its own purpose.

Level of Aspiration

Feeling of success or failure is, to a great extent, dependent on an individual's level of aspiration regarding a particular task. G. D. Frank (16) points out that level of aspiration pre-supposes a goal which has an inner structure. He defines the level of aspiration as the level of future performance in a familiar task which an individual knowing the level of past performance in that task undertakes to reach.

The effect of an individual's level of aspiration in respect to a certain task helps to determine his learning and performance.

Kurt Lewin (28) says that theoretical considerations show that most of the qualitative and quantitative results related to the level of aspiration can be linked with three factors, namely, the seeking of success, the avoiding of failure, and the cognitive factor of a probability judgment.

> Goal striving is a "directed" behavior toward existing goals and is closely related to problems of locomotion toward a goal, of frustration, reaching toward a goal, reaching a goal and consummating behavior.

Lewin also points out that after a person has set his level of aspiration and then acted he reacts to his achieving or not achieving his goals.

Experience of Failure

Research has accumulated much information about pupils who leave school early. Many school dropouts have negative attitudes toward school. They perceive themselves as those who are inept and slow. They apparently have not experienced success in an adequate amount. Studies reported by the Department of Elementary-Kindergarten-Nursery Education (39) suggest that the effects of deprivation are not easily reversible. Evidence is abundant that potential school failures can be predicted. During the early school years future dropouts can be identified. Improvement of the school program in light of the children's needs might help reverse the trend. Emphasis has been placed upon uniform standards of achievement in many school situations. Such practices ignore the differences among children. We have evidence that many students are achieving and making much progress. For them, success is being achieved. On the other hand, we are aware of troubled teachers, students, and parents who are concerned about unresolved problems. We must find ways of meeting individual differences. Success in this regard, for example, means fewer young offenders in our courts.

"Success matters very much to the under-six age group," says James Hymes (23, pp. 30-31). "These children want so desperately to be able to hold their heads high. . . Man-made failure really hurts young children."

John Holt (22) tells us that ". . . children fail because they are afraid, bored, and confused. . . Success implies overcoming an obstacle. . . Success is turning 'I can't' into 'I can and I did.'"

Perhaps at this point we ought to interject once more our personal concern lest all incidental "failures" be seen as bad. While he is training for a track meet, a high jumper will keep

setting the bar a little higher than he has jumped before. Naturally he will knock it down a good many times before he achieves the greater height--if he ever does. In this sense "failures" are absolutely essential to learning and growth; their absence would be evidence that the student has simply quit striving to go beyond yesterday's level. The distinction we are seeking to make is between "having failures," which is a healthy part of life, and "being a failure" (or feeling like one), which is inwardly corrosive.

The distinction is, we think, crucial to curriculum-making. For any assumption that every task must yield automatic success will condemn students to a bland monotony. Success without challenge--without the element of "stretch"--can be an empty thing. Probably the general pattern of a learner's life needs to be one of success--but the better that pattern is established, with its consequent upbuilding of self-confidence, the more the learner will relish and benefit by the occasional challenge which he cannot immediately master.

II. THE ROLE OF THE "SELF" IN LEARNING AND BEHAVIOR

The Self and Motivation

A dynamic quality of the self is its role in motivation. As William Purkey (41, p. 19) points out, the maintenance and enhancement of the perceived self is the motive behind all behavior. If this is so, then it follows that there is only one kind of motivation, and that is the personal internal motivation that each and every human being has at all times, in all places, and when engaged in any activity. "Each individual," Purkey tells us, "is striving to behave in ways which are consistent with his self interpretation . . . People are constantly trying to behave in a manner which is consistent with the way they view themselves. . . . human motivation is a product of the universal striving to maintain, protect, and enhance the self." (41, pp. 12-13)

L. Festinger (15) similarly points out that a comfortable state of mind results when we take action which is compatible with the beliefs we hold about ourselves.

Arthur Combs (6, p. 85) has put this in another way: "People are always motivated; in fact, they are never unmotivated. They may not be motivated to do what we would prefer they do, but it can never be truly said that they are unmotivated."

Self Image and Experience of Success

Contemporary development in education recognizes the learner's objective and personal evaluation of himself as a dominant influence on his success in school. A large body of contemporary research points to the relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement. A conclusion that the successful student is one who is likely to see himself in positive ways has been verified by a number of studies. The unsuccessful student tends to perceive himself as less able to fulfill required tasks, less eager to learn, less confident, and less ambitious. As a result, William Purkey (41, p. 26) suggests the following conclusions:

> The indication seems to be that success or failure in school significantly influences the ways in which students view themselves. Students who experience repeated success in school are likely to develop positive feelings about their abilities, while those who encounter failure tend to develop negative views of themselves.

W. B. Brookover, et al, (4) concluded that, from extensive research on self-image and achievement, the assumption that human ability is the most important factor in achievement is questionable. The student's attitudes limit the level of achievement in school.

Ira Gordon (20) tells us that a person's concept of himself is an index to his feelings of success. His feelings about himself affect his learning and performance wherever he is--in school, home, or community. A positive self-image is important in the development of a fully functioning, adequate personality. We know that a child's picture of himself, for example, may color all his relationships in a classroom and his ability to learn what we want to teach. From our study of human behavior, it is reasonable to conclude that successful teachers help pupils build positive concepts of themselves.

Arthur W. Combs (6, pp. 51-53, adapted) tells us that extremely adequate, self-actualizing persons seem to be characterized by an essentially positive view of self. They see themselves as persons who are liked, wanted, acceptable, able; as persons of dignity and integrity, of worth and importance. It is the people who see themselves as unliked, unwanted, unworthy, unimportant, or unable who fill our jails, our mental hospitals, and our institutions. These are maladjusts, the desperate ones, against whom we must protect ourselves. The concept of self is learned. People learn who they are and what they are from the ways in which they have been treated by those who surround them in the process of growing up. They learn from the experiences they have with life. To produce a positive self, it is necessary to provide experiences that teach individuals they are positive people.

The Adequate Personality

About the adequate personality, Combs (6, p. 51) says in part,

> Extremely adequate, self actualizing persons seem to be characterized by an essentially positive view of self.

To summarize his view of the adequate personality, Combs (6, p. 61) names four characteristics of the perceptual field: a positive view of self, identification with others, acceptance of and openness to experience, and the richness and availability of the perceptual field. All of these ways of perceiving are learned; they can also be taught if we can but find ways to provide the necessary kinds of experiences.

It seems logical to conclude that the public school is in a crucial position to bring about these necessary conditions. The production of such people should be a primary goal of education.

If we may assume that an adequate personality and a positive self image constitute evidence of "experiencing success,"-- and are built upon a history of personal success experiences--we might well focus our attention on and finding ways of achieving the goal of providing adequate opportunities for success to every young person.

Earl Kelly (26) tells us, on the other hand, that we see evidence of crippling efforts of self all around us. Some people are ridden by unreasonable fears. The fearful person looks at his "self" and sees that it is not sufficient to meet what he fears. How do we get that way, we might ask: We get that way by the lives we lead. Damage to the self comes from factors involved in our environments.

Carl Rogers (42, p. 66) says he finds a person involved in the process of psychological health is sensitively open to all of his experiences--sensitive to what is going on in his environment, sensitive to other individuals with whom he has relationships, and sensitive perhaps most of all to the feelings, reactions, and emergent meanings which he discovers in himself. The fear of some aspects of his own experiences continues to diminish, so that more and more of his life is available to him.

Motivation and Experience of Success

Jack Frymier (18, p. 23) says,

> Motivation gives both direction and intensity to behavior. It gives direction and intensity to human behavior in an educational context. Motivation to learn

> in school gives direction and intensity to student's behavior in a school situation. . . Motives relate to the "why" of human behavior. . . why people do what they do is the motivational question.

Frymier (18, p. 26) continues,

> The ultimate objective of educational effort is to help youngsters learn to behave according to the best knowledge that is available at any given time. And "motivation to learn" ought to aim people in that direction. Motivation gives intensity to behavior in the human organism; intensity implies effort, activity, energy output. . . If values are the part of motivation which gives direction to human behavior, what causes the organism to strive? to initiate? to carry through?

Five factors seem especially important, says Frymier: (1) availability and quality of stimuli, (2) perceptual openness, (3) handling of dissonance, (4) physiological functioning, and (5) anxiety.

Research studies show that motivation is either affected by or a function of the quality, richness, intricacy, uniqueness, and complexity of stimulus material. The organism needs stimulation. When it is deprived of stimuli, the organism seeks stimuli or even makes its own. Over extended periods of time organisms which exist in stimulus-deprived environments develop lower mental abilities. . . Those which exist and function in stimulus environments which are rich and varied develop higher mental abilities.

Another factor, says Frymier, (18, pp. 28-29) which affects the intensity of motivation is the personality structure of the learner and especially the openness to experience. Those persons who are maximally perceptive, adequate, and relatively unthreatened are drawn to the new and the novel and the unknown. Those who are psychologically "closed" and have extensive defense mechanisms and perceptual barriers tend to repel new stimuli. Openness is a function of self-concept and manifests itself especially in the response of the organism to stress or threat, but the open individual is more curious, more inquiring, more excited, more "motivated."

Combs (7, p. 181) also points out that the adequate person is well informed. He must have a field of perception extensive enough to provide understandings of the events in which he is enmeshed, and his perceptions must be available when he needs them. Rich perceptual fields are a product of the kinds of opportunities an individual has experienced. Their availability seems dependent upon at least two factors: the individual's discovery of personal meaning and the satisfaction of need.

To make growth and self actualization possible, says A. H. Maslow, (32, pp. 181-182) it is necessary to understand that capacities, organs, and organ systems press to function and express themselves and to be used and exercised; such use is satisfying and disuse is irritating. Capacities clamor to be used and cease their clamor only when they are well used. Not only is it fun to use our capacities, but it is also necessary.

The image of the "good" school which emerges from the observations above is fairly clear. It will be a school which brings each youngster along in a basically happy pattern of success combined with rich stimulation and a warm, supportive climate of personal acceptance and affection. The young person who lives his years in such an environment will believe in himself. His perception will open up so that he can see the world and the people around him--and himself--with clear eyes, simply because he will have less and less reason to "close down" his perceptions out of anxiety and fear. He will progressively develop the "nerve" to tackle tasks which might otherwise have frightened him, simply because he has learned from experience that he has what it takes to master the challenge. His relationship with others will be increasingly easy and open because he has experienced so much warmth and support that the "weather he expects" is rather kindly.

The question follows naturally, then: How can we in the schools create such an environment? In the section which follows we shall look first at the effects of certain rather general conditions; then we shall survey a few major school projects aimed at a new emphasis on success.

III. HELPING LEARNERS EXPERIENCE SUCCESS

Consciously or unconsciously, every human being is constantly learning something, desirable or not. Every individual is motivated to learn from his environment that which seems possible or essential to him in an effort to maintain his equilibrium or balance. Our task should be focused on providing a learning environment which facilitates optimum growth for each individual. In the reports that follow, an attempt has been made to identify the experience of success and appraise ways of helping children experience success.

The Effects of Grouping

In a study comparing children grouped according to ability, Maxine Mann (30) found that 25 of 102 children gave positive responses to questions dealing with ways they saw themselves. In the lowest ability section, all of the 14 gave negative responses. Mann comments in part as follows:

> What are the experiences which have contributed to the way children in the "top" and "bottom" groups see themselves? Could teacher's rejection of the low group and acceptance of the high group help account for it?

The purpose of John A. Schmid's study (45, adapted, and 17) was to examine the effectiveness of sociometric grouping of children in fifth grade classrooms. Social factors were measured through use of sociometric tests; academic achievement was measured through standardized tests. For the population of the school involved in the research, there was evidence to support the following statements:

> The children will achieve more when they are given some volition in choosing the companions with whom they work and play.
>
> The children will choose to work in groups that are more heterogeneous than the groups the teachers chose for them.
>
> The groups chosen by the children using only the criterion, "I want to work with. . .," are workable, teachable groups.
>
> The children are more responsive in groups they choose for themselves than they are in the groups teachers form for them.
>
> About one-half the time children will choose to work and play with the same companions.
>
> The patterns of the children's choices for work companions are significantly not consistent.
>
> The patterns of the children's choices for work and play companions did not follow the color sub-culture patterns of the classes.

The need for situations within or outside of groups which help to free a learner's capacity for learning is increasingly considered important. Murphy (36, p. 101) points out:

> The role of the teacher in relation to human intellectual emancipation is one which emphasizes the biological individuality which evolutionary theory has emphasized. The teacher must help the learner believe in his own individuality and his capacity to learn.

Meredith (35) reports, however, that

> The pattern of authority for decisionmaking as demonstrated by the teacher has an immediate and strong

influence on the kind and amount of involvement and participation which emerges from members of a group. A number of studies have shown that different motivational responses by children can be produced by different patterns of authority relationships, especially as they center around the teacher.

Caring and Self Actualization

Although this Council has purposely dedicated itself to enhancing the chances all children have for an adequate ingredient of success in their life experience, we recognize that there is another equally basic ingredient which must never be ignored. This is the element which is called by such varied names as acceptance, belonging, respect, warmth, support, caring, unconditional positive regard--and in the ultimate degree, love. Without this element no human being can thrive for long. Whether we think about a child, a parent, or a teacher we recognize the significance of "caring" or "being cared for" as an essential element in the process of actualization or, in other words, the experience of success.

The following material is taken or adapted from Milton Mayeroff's On Caring (33).

Carl Rogers says, ". . . the degree to which I can create relationships which facilitate the growth of others as separate persons is a measure of the growth I have achieved in myself. . ."

The Mayeroff volume includes the following statement by Andrae Angyal:

> We ourselves want to be needed. We do not only have needs, we are also strongly motivated by neededness. . . We are restless when we are not needed because we feel "unfinished," "incomplete," and we can only get completed in and through these relations. We are motivated to search not only for what we lack and need but also for that for which we are needed, and what is wanted from us.

On the same page we find these words from Victor E. Frankal:

> For only to the extent that man has fulfilled the concrete meaning of his personal existence will he also have fulfilled himself. . . The meaning which a being has to fulfill is something beyond himself; it is never just himself.
>
> To care for another person is to help him grow and actualize himself.

Milton Mayeroff says, in part:

> A father caring for his child, for example, respects the child as existing in his own right and is striving to grow. He feels needed by the child and helps him grow by responding to his need to grow.
>
> In the context of a man's life, caring has a way of ordering his other values and activities around it. . . There is a basic stability in his life; he is "in place" in the world, . . . By caring, then, through caring for certain others, by seeing them through caring, a man lives the meaning of his own life. . . He is at home, not through dominating, or explaining an appreciation, but through caring and being cared for.

To help learners become self actualizing persons is a way of providing opportunities for the experience of success. Its effect on learning and performance is evident in developing more adequate persons. A greater openness to experience, says Combs, (6) offers many advantages. It provides adequate people with more data; and with more data, they are much more likely to be right. Maslow found, for example, that self-actualizing people were not only connotely right they were cognitively right as well. . . This is another way of saying adequate persons behave more intelligently, for what else is intelligence but the ability to behave more effectively and efficiently?

Educational Conditions

The following section is adapted from an article by Fred T. Wilhelms (49).

A child's family must bear a heavy responsibility for providing conditions in the early years for stimulation, support, and for providing experiences that facilitate individual growth. Only the home and the community can turn out-of-school hours into a time of great and diverse opportunity to respond.

Nevertheless, the school and classroom can be blankly barren or vividly stimulating. The very texture and appearance of building and room can invite exploration and adventure. So modest a matter as how charmingly and invitingly books are put in reach can make a great difference in how a child will venture into the worlds of thought and fantasy. There are rooms where living nature is brought in, to be touched and fondled and wondered at. There are ingenious teachers who get their children amazing opportunities to "fool around" in unconscious creativity with beginnings of diverse arts and crafts and the tools of technology and science. . . Above all, there are teachers who by their whole manner and temperament. . .

subtly encourage children to respond vividly, to take risks, to toy with ideas, and to open themselves up. Experiences of success can be observed.

Wilhelms continues: Success experience must be authentic, not faked. The inward need for success does not imply that there shall be no failures. Quite the contrary, a child who is stimulated and supported to press out to the edge of his abilities will "fail" often--far more often than the child who has not been encouraged to be bold. . . There is a vast difference between having more failures out at the edge and being a failure down the middle of one's life stream. . . It is plain social immorality to force a child to be in school or in some class and then load the situation in such a way that he--being what he is, for whatever reason--must inevitably be a failure.

. . . Success need not mean being "the best." It merely means doing well what one needs to do--and knowing that one has done it. In school terms, it means learning what one needs to learn, making a genuine contribution to one's self and to the group.

Schools need to provide a great diversity of ways to success. When curriculum is being planned, every unit of work should be tested to see how many roads to success are built into it and how many ways there are for individuals to contribute diversity to the common whole. The entire school environment can be examined for opportunities to help each child work and learn in his private way. . .

SOME ORGANIZED SCHOOL EFFORTS TO EMPHASIZE SUCCESS

Around the country there are educators who are making special efforts to heighten the experience of success in children's lives. In the following pages we sketch a few of the outstanding projects, with some commentaries on their apparent results.

Project Success

Anne Sapp (44) describes a project called "Succeeding with Success Environment" under way in Atlanta Public Schools.

Everything is affirmative--the students' academic gains, their feelings, and the feelings of their teachers. All "Project Success" teachers provide positive reinforcement--a tangible reward coupled with verbal praise--whenever students exhibit desired behavior. In elementary schools, students earn checkmarks on success cards. They may earn tickets to accumulate to fill in cards which may be exchanged for specific rewards during "trading time."

Project Success teachers observe three basic rules: (1) Each child must experience success; (2) Each child receives work at his own level--work he can do; (3) Each child's work must be evaluated frequently and reinforced immediately.

Data collected by the staff confirm the benefits of the success technique. Project classes have made greater gains in IQ scores than comparison classes. Further, they have gained twice as many months in reading and almost that much in math.

However, the real benefit of the program can be measured in happier children and in teacher comments such as "The success technique helps me to be a person in the classroom and gives me a way to let the children be people."

Schools Without Failure

Dr. William Glasser has been for some years a dynamic leader in the effort to perfect school programs which try for a maximum of success experiences. Under the general heading of "Schools Without Failure," a number of schools have followed his lead. Glasser (19, pp. xiii-xiv) suggests that our typical schools at the present time are designed for failure. Pupils who fail usually resent school, continue to have poor self-images, and too often become serious problems for the school and for society.

> Too many students fail in school today. The rest are hampered by the intense pressure to succeed in schools where even many serious and qualified students do badly. . .
>
> The main obstacle is our present educational philosophy, a philosophy of noninvolvement, nonrelevance, and limited emphasis on thinking. . .

Among other things, Dr. Glasser (19, p. 6) says,

> I believe that if a child, no matter what his background, can succeed in school he has an excellent chance for success in life. If he fails at any stage of his educational career--elementary school, junior high, high school, or college--his chances for success in life are greatly diminished. . .
>
> Unless we can provide schools where children, through a reasonable use of their capacities, can succeed, we will do little to solve the major problems of our country. We will have more social disturbances, more people who need to be kept in jails, prisons, and mental hospitals, more people who need social workers

> to take care of their needs because they cannot succeed in this society and are no longer willing to try. . .

Excerpts from Glasser's book illustrate suggestions made by the author in helping people succeed.

> Basic needs are described as the need for love and the need for self-worth. A person must learn to give and receive love; he must find someone in the world who loves him, many people if possible, but at the minimum one person he loves and one person who loves him. If a person succeeds in giving and receiving love and can do so with some consistency throughout his life, he is to some degree a success (19, p. 12).

> Schools are much more directly concerned with the second basic need, the need to feel worthwhile. Knowledge and the ability to think are required to achieve worthiness. If a child goes to school and fails to gain knowledge to learn to think and to learn to solve problems, it is unlikely that his family or his environment will correct this failure. . . (19, p. 13).

> Probably the school practice that produces most failures is grading A-B-C-D-F. Because grades are so time honored and traditional, anyone who raises a voice argument finds himself in the center of a hurricane. . . but many prominent people have spoken out against them. . . In elementary school, grades set the stage for early failure in school. Students who leave elementary school a failure . . . in many cases can be traced as being directly related to the grading system and will often never succeed again in school (19, pp. 59-60).

> High grades are not a good indicator of high performance (19, p. 62).

The author points out importance of thinking in the school program (19, p. 76) and suggests abolishing A-B-C-D-F grades (19, p. 95).

In one of the studies of William Glasser's Schools Without Failure program, Keeper, Engle, and Thorne (14) attempted to measure the effects of a program in the Palo Alto School District in California. One conclusion was that the SWF program produced pupils who were more task-oriented and more inclined to be involved in work-type activities, than were pupils in the school not having the SWF program.

Robert Marc (31) investigated the role perception of teachers in large suburban elementary schools which implemented the SWF philosophy. He found that teachers who participated in SWF seminars were more oriented toward meeting personality needs of individuals

and less threatened by innovation than were their non-participating counterparts. His study also showed that principals involved in SWF seminars were more accurate in assessing the role perception of the individual teachers with whom they worked.

A program on humanizing education is under way in the New Castle Area School District, New Castle, Pennsylvania. James Masters and Grace Laverty (27, p. iii) report in part as follows:

> An evaluation of Dr. William Glasser's Schools Without Failure program was carried out during the program's first year. . . Ten elementary schools were paired on the basis of size, socio-economic, and past achievement of pupils. One school of each pair was randomly assigned to begin teacher training and implementation of the SWF program; the other school of each pair became a control school continuing to operate as it had in the past.
>
> Pre- and post-testing of pupil achievement and of pupil attitudes toward self, toward school, and toward others were employed. Teacher and parent attitudes toward educational issues were also measured on a pre-test, post-test basis. Instructional sessions and SWF school classroom interaction were measured through the use of the Expanded Category System and the Reciprocal Category System during direct classroom observation period.
>
> The results of the study indicated that, during the first year, the program had its major impact upon teachers. Teachers in the SWF came to accept the SWF philosophy more and were found to be effectively using SWF methods. They began to use instructional sessions, some of the techniques they used in classroom meetings.
>
> Little difference existed in the achievement of pupils in SWF schools and control schools. However, some positive changes were found in SWF schools, primarily pupil attitudes toward being in school and toward doing difficult school work. Some positive changes also occurred in SWF schools--intermediate pupil attitudes toward the importance of doing school assignments and the importance of learning. In SWF schools the number of pupils referred to principals for disciplinary reasons was greatly reduced over that occurring in previous years.

Research information concerning the effects of humanization programs on pupils is limited. However, some attempts are under way. Anita Simon (47) reports a plan for humanizing learning developed

at the Research for Better Schools Laboratory in Pennsylvania. The Research and Development Center of Johns Hopkins University is developing instruments of student attitudes and values. The Texas Laboratory is working on measurement of pupil characteristics and teacher behavior as they relate to individual thinking and learning.

Success Card

The New Jersey Education Association (12, p. 7) decided that the typical report cards were inadequate for informing parents of their children's progress in school. The Association developed "success cards" and sent samples to teachers in every school district with this message:

> When was the last time parents of children in your classroom heard some of the good things that happened to their youngsters in your school? Here's one way you can encourage more positive communication between schools, teachers, and parents.
>
> Stop once each week. Think about two or three highlights when children achieved in ways that otherwise might never come to the attention of their parents. Take a minute to drop a note to those parents. Two or three cards a week can help spell continued success for the children in your class as well as continued community support for quality education.

The NJEA has distributed over 170,000 success cards to teachers throughout the State. Four-by-nine-inch cards are used. The teacher writes a message on one side and places the address and a stamp on the other.

Kathryn Stillwell, NJEA's president, says, "The purpose of the typical card is to report. The purpose of the success card is to commend."

The Task of the Teacher

The following section leans heavily upon the comments of William W. Purkey (41).

The task of the teacher "is to help each student gain a positive and realistic image of himself as a learner."

To accomplish this purpose, ". . . a first step, is to avoid instilling negative concepts of self. Once a child has formed a negative image of himself as a learner, the task of the teacher becomes very difficult."

Some studies have shown that "it is possible to develop a curriculum in which the expected academic learning takes place while positive self concepts are being built."

A. M. Crovetto, et al (10), developed a Head Start Curriculum designed to offset self concept in a positive direction. The experimental group of children was compared with a control group. It was found that the experimental class members showed gain on the Draw-a-Man test while the control group did not. The conclusion was the experimental curriculum appeared to be effective in helping to develop a more positive self concept in children.

William Purkey (41) identifies some questions relative to the teacher's personal role. What part do teachers play? Can teachers change the child's self image if they try to do so? If they can, what methods of teaching produce what kinds of self image? Is it possible to distinguish between teachers in the frequency and kind of comments which they make about the child's self?

Some of these questions are reported by J. W. Stainer (48) who conducted a study involving careful observation, recording, and analyzing of data from teacher-child and child-child interaction in four elementary school classrooms. The investigation showed more differences between teachers in the frequency of references about the child in their comments, probably in their positive or negative comments on the child's performance, status, and self confidence. Stainer concluded that changes in the child's self image can be made. Purkey says that teaching methods can be adapted so that definite changes of the kind sought will occur in the self without injury to the academic program or the process.

An important step that teachers can take in the classroom is to provide an educational atmosphere of success rather than failure.

R. C. Wylie (50) made a tentative statement after reviewing several studies: ". . . students are likely to change their self evaluation after experimentally induced success or failure." C. G. Costello (9) found that overall, regardless of the task or the ability of the students, praise produces more improvement of performance than blame.

D. J. Ludwig and M. L. Maehn (29) show that the approval of significant outcomes caused an increase in self ratings and an increased preference for activities connected with the criterion task and a decreased preference for related activities.

E. B. Page (37) found that pupils' performance improved significantly when teachers wrote encouraging comments on their written work. A control group, given conventional grades without comments, lost ground.

William Purkey explains that continuing awareness of failure results in lowered expectations, not learning.

Arthur Combs and Donald Snygg (8) explain that a positive view is learned from the ways people treat the learner. People learn that they are able, not from failure but from success.

A summary statement by William Purkey (41, p. 56) follows:

> What this discussion hopes to say to teachers is that a backlog of challenge, freedom, respect, warmth, control, and success develops positive self images in students and encourages academic achievement. The absence of these factors makes for the person who is crippled psychologically.

IV. MAKING EDUCATION MORE EFFECTIVE

The point has often been made that education must be directed to the full development of the human personality. And yet many schools continue certain school practices which stand in the way of full development of each child's potential. Harold G. Shane (46) points to some of these practices and urges that they be eliminated. He says in part:

> 1. I would urge that we drop as rapidly as possible the current practice of chopping U.S. public education into arbitrary segments. There is no inherent reason for having K - 6 - 6 or K - 3 - 3 - 6 structures that create artificial parameters or boundaries within our school system. . . We now need to explain a virtually untried concept: a life-long, seamless open-access learning continuum through which the learners flow from early childhood years to old age. . .
>
> 2. A second practice to be discontinued is that of promotion policies--policies that reflect the presumption that every child should achieve at the same level at the end of each grade segment. Developmentally, this is non-sensical.
>
> 3. Annual promotions are closely related to a third candidate for the educational junkyard; the policy of failing children if they fall too far below standard norms. . .

4. The graded school concept. . . today the rigid graded system, with its close identification with annual promotion and failure, probably is the greatest cause of frustration to creative teachers who seek to develop a personalized program for each of the children assigned to them.

5. . . . the practice of using so-called ability groupings into which no child really fits.

6. . . . we ought to face up to the issue of whether or not conventional report cards should continue in use.

7. . . . discontinue awarding conventional diplomas . . .

For improving early education, Shane suggests:

1. Let us add flexibility by replacing fixed school entrance age requirements. Professional judgment as to the learner's readiness, not the calendar, should determine the entry.

2. Let us add alternatives to the prevailing policies of specific admission time.

3. Let us move beyond the long-established September to May school year.

4. . . . make all education "special," by personalizing it. . .

5. . . . end the need for compensatory education in early childhood. . . Good educational experiences, begun early enough, should preclude many problems that are costly or impossible to remedy in adolescents or in young adults.

6. Let us consider changing our compulsory school attendance laws so that as early as thirteen to fifteen year age range the school can begin to serve as a broker in arranging non-school work experiences. . .

7. . . . lift the rim of our vision beyond the concept of team teaching to include the idea of teaching partnerships in which staff organization permits a more methodical utilization of teacher's talents in varied instructional fields and with learners from a wide age range.

Working Relations Between Parents and Teachers

Parents and teachers working together can help children grow up and learn to become fine competent adults. Since it is generally agreed that parents and teachers want the same thing, why don't they work together more closely? In an effort to find answers to this question, Ralph C. Eckert (11, p. 71) posed the question in a workshop of parents, teachers, and administrators. As a result, a list of fears of parents, teachers, and administrators was developed. Some of the fears of parents follow:

1. Parents fear they will make a poor impression on the teacher because they have less education than the teacher and this may affect their child negatively.

2. Parents fear that the teacher may become angry at them and take it out on the child in some way.

3. Parents fear that the teacher may find out about conflicts in the home and blame the parents for the child's problems.

4. Parents fear that everything told to the teacher may not be kept in confidence.

5. Parents may fear, or be hostile toward, teachers because of their own unhappy school experiences.

6. Parents fear they will be criticized for their child's behavior.

7. Parents fear criticisms for things they feel they can do nothing about.

8. Parents fear that they may be asked to help with homework and, not knowing the newer methods, that they may confuse the child or be thought ignorant.

9. Parents fear an unscheduled home visit; the teacher may catch them at their worst.

10. Parents fear that any suggestions they make may be taken as criticism.

Eckert suggests that,

. . . it is good for groups of teachers and groups of parents to discuss their fears, get them out in the open,

> think about them rather than keep them inside and just feel them. When we become more aware of our unconscious fears--those crippling emotions which make us defensive or aggressive rather than cooperative, hostile rather than friendly, rigid rather than sensitive--we find it easier to seek help of others in our search for greater understanding of this human being for whom we feel responsible as parent or teacher. . .

Parents and the Problem of Failure

Ethel Kawin (25, p. 76) speaks as follows about the parents' need for special help in regard to the problem of failure:

> Not only does this apply to parents of children who encounter failure in school but to all parents. Everyone seeks success, but everyone has to face failure at some time. Everyone, therefore, needs to develop mentally healthful ways of reacting to failure to be able to take failure in stride. Parents should be given the opportunities to recognize the importance of early successes and constructive use of mistakes. . . . Parents who have acquired such a point of view will be prepared to react more helpfully in teacher-parent conferences concerning children's problems.

Assessing Affectivity

Throughout this monograph, reference has been made to studies in which attempts have been made to measure affectivity as well as cognitive learning. The section which follows depends almost completely upon the work of Robert E. Bills (2) in the assessment of affectivity. Traditionally, however, education has been a process in which a student learns things which, supposedly, are important for him to learn. As Bills says,

> Little concern has been shown for the student as a person during the learning process. This singular concern for cognitive learning has led to attempts to evaluate schools on the basis of what their students know. Improvements in the school are often gauged against this same criterion--how well the students learn.

But, during the past half century, Bills tells us, concern about the single-minded purpose of the schools has been expressed with increasing frequency. Questions such as these are being asked: Should not the schools be concerned with developing reflective or

critical thinking? What about the development of creativity? Should there not be some concern for the personal welfare and mental health and happiness of students?

In recent years, such questions have been asked more often. The 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act has given further emphasis to the need of schools to concern themselves with attitudes toward self and concepts of self as objective evidence of the positive effects of grant projects on their variables.

A major work dealing with the affective domain is A System of Assessing Affectivity by Robert E. Bills. Through the use of an instrument developed by Bills, Index of Adjustment and Values, the characteristics of four groups of people were identified: + + persons; - + persons; + - persons; - - persons. The scores derived represent a person's self acceptance (how he feels about his own worth) and his beliefs about the self acceptance of other people in his peer group. Bills reports as follows:

> The first of these groups, + + people, has acceptance of self scores greater than the average of the population on which the IAV was standardized and "other" scores equal to or greater than "self" scores. The second group, - +, has "self" acceptance below the population average and "other" scores equal to or greater than their "self" scores. A third group, + -, has "self" scores above the population average but "other" scores less than the "self" scores. The last group, - -, has acceptance of "self" scores below the population average and "other" scores less than the "self" scores.

Each of the four groups has distinguishing characteristics. Bills continues:

> The + + person is basically secure. He holds positive attitudes toward himself and others. Essentially, he is cooperative, assumes responsibility, and exercises imagination and creativity. He is tuned to his own needs. Yet at the same time he is sensitive to the rights and feelings of other people. . .
>
> The - + person yields readily to arbitrary authority but he does so with inner resentment that may be expressed in lying, cheating, stealing, and occasionally in vandalism. . . At school he readily accedes to authority and becomes submissive.
>
> The + - person is basically a + person who is defending himself against other people. It is likely that he ~~restrains~~ mistrusts himself but this view of himself is too painful

> so he defends himself against it. He deals with the external world and with other people, seldom involving himself and continuously directing attention away from himself. . . He has respect for constituted authority but avoids accepting responsibility, where possible. He would like to be the authority and as such is quite arbitrary. . . Since he is likely to do much talking in class and to be a non-participator. . . he is likely to be average and retarded in his studies. . .
>
> Less is known about the - - person than about the other groups. This sort of person questions the worth of people including himself. He has a high level of negativism. He is uncooperative, unimaginative, and irresponsible. . . He may be motivated by a desire to hurt other people. . . He may be rude and insubordinate . . . shows little interest in school work. . .
>
> Emotionally, these groups are quite different from each other. The - + person has a weak, highly controlled emotional expression; the + - person has a strong, poorly controlled emotional life. The + - person might be described as volatile. On the other hand, the + + person has a strong emotional life and is well controlled. He is capable of feeling and expressing strong emotional life, but usually does so in a constructive, positive manner.

If we look simply at self acceptance, continues Bills, and ignore a person's notions about how his peers accept themselves, we find differences.

> People who are self accepting when compared with people who are less accepting have higher group status, are more responsible, are more efficient intellectually, are more dominant, have a higher level of social participation, have fewer physical complaints of psychological origin, are less anxious, are better adjusted, have greater school achievement, are more proficient in English, and suffer less from feelings of depression. . .
>
> When the members of a group are free to select their leader, they most often choose + + people. Next most acceptable to them are - + people, and this is especially true when the behavior of the group is regulated by a set of rules. The - + person's authority is outside himself, and he is willing to accept authority . . . The - - person apparently does not desire or is not offered leadership positions.

Bills reports further:

> Several studies have shown that the most successful leaders are + + people. . . Our successful teachers may be + + people. To summarize: The + + person is basically secure. He holds positive attitudes toward himself and others.

Conclusion

From Bills' research and from studies quoted earlier, we seem to have adequate evidence to conclude that experience of success builds confidence in self and others. It seems apparent that a function of the school is to help provide learning opportunities which make success available to all.

SUMMARY

The guiding principles of the Council have been that (1) the experience of success is crucial and essential for the optimal development of any human being; and (2) a primary function of educational leadership is to provide a humane setting and climate in which success experiences and the feeling of success are possible for all.

The major function of this review of the literature has been to examine the available evidence for the purpose of testing the validity of our assumption and to identify some of the effects of experience of success on learning and behavior. Some outcomes of our study follow:

(1) To a large extent, the available research supports our assumption that experiences of success are essential to the development of every human being. Studies and judgments of authorities in the field report that:

> An adequate person tends to perceive man as growing, dynamic, creative, continuously in search of adequacy.
>
> A person's concept or image of himself is an index to his feelings of success or failure. His feelings about himself affect his learning and performance wherever he is. A positive self image is important in the development of a fully functioning adequate personality.
>
> Adequate persons see themselves as persons of dignity and integrity, of worth and importance. On the other hand, persons who do not feel successful see themselves as unliked, unwanted, unworthy, unimportant or unable; they are the persons who fill our jails, our mental hospitals, and our institutions.

(2) The concept of self is learned. People learn who they are and what they are from the ways in which they are treated by those who surround them in the process of growing up. To produce a positive self, it is essential to provide experiences that help individuals become positive people.

(3) To understand the relationship between motivation and experience of success is important. Motivation gives both direction and intensity to human behavior in an educational context. Motivation to learn in school gives direction and intensity to student behavior in a school situation.

It appears doubtful that anybody is "unmotivated." But what he feels motivated to do will depend on how he perceives his experiences.

(4) The organism needs stimulation. When it is deprived of stimuli, the organism seeks stimuli or makes its own.

(5) Failure tends to increase failure.

(6) Social and emotional adjustments are increasingly difficult for students who experience failure. Some studies show that problems arising from difficulty with the work are secondary to difficulties in making friends and in pupil-teacher relationships.

(7) Many school dropouts have negative attitudes toward school. They perceive themselves as those who are inept and slow. Apparently they have not experienced success in adequate amounts.

(8) Some school practices tend to foster development of negative attitudes (A-B-C-D report cards, single grade standards).

(9) A great task of the teacher is to help each student gain a positive and realistic image of himself as a learner.

(10) In building such an image, love and caring are significant to learning and behavior in the same way that success is, and must be provided along with success to provide a total environment conducive to human growth.

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